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Inside APHIS

Vol. 13 No. 2

United States Department of Agriculture • Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

March/April 1993

Reverend Jesse Jackson Joins APHIS in Celebrating African American History Month



Jesse Jackson mesmerized the audience gathered in the Jefferson Auditorium with his message of equality among all races.

Children from Van Ness Elementary School—USDA's adopted school—eagerly gathered in the front row of Jefferson Auditorium in USDA's South Building, waiting, along with the rest of the anxious crowd, to hear the mesmerizing voice of Reverend Jesse Jackson.

Organized by APHIS' Equal Opportunity and Civil Rights staff as part of Black History Month, the program was a much awaited event throughout all of USDA. Jackson's appearance was sponsored by APHIS and its partner agencies, the Federal Grain Inspection Service, the Packers and Stockyards Admin-

istration, and the Agricultural Cooperative Service.

According to program moderator Shelia Clemons, HRD's Chief of Performance, Conduct, and Labor Relations, the national theme of this year's program was African American Scholars, Leaders, Activists, and Writers.

Who has succeeded in all of these professions better than Reverend Jesse Jackson? A man who: has received over 40 honorary degrees; is one of America's foremost political and social figures in the movement for justice and democracy both nationally and internationally; has

played a major role in virtually every movement over the past 3 years for empowerment, peace, civil rights, gender equality, and economic and social justice; and has written two books.

Terry Medley, APHIS' Acting Associate Administrator welcomed USDA employees to the program and commended APHIS' own efforts to develop a more diverse workforce.

"APHIS is working on its own rainbow coalition through our efforts in diversity, our partnerships with the 1890 institutions, and our human resources efforts in terms of recruitment, development, and summer jobs," said Medley. "We are in the process of establishing disabled employment issues councils, Hispanic American issues councils, and African American issues councils. While we have a way to go to accrue the real benefits, APHIS champions these causes, and we hope that our efforts will help produce some of the scholars, leaders, activists, and writers of tomorrow."

Stephanie Luster, a student at the University of the District of Columbia, sang the program's musical selection and brought the audience to its feet with her rendition of the inspirational "One Moment in Time."

Following Luster, Kenneth C. Clayton, USDA's Acting Assistant Secretary for Marketing and Inspection Services, made a brief but gracious introduction for the man for whom little introduction is needed.

Speaking from the heart with few notes, Jackson addressed the audience. "How do you develop an
(See JACKSON on page 10)

Secretarial Focus

Overcoming Procrastination

By Linda Story, Program Manager, Operation Jumpstart

At one time or another we've all found ourselves procrastinating; intentionally putting off doing something that should be done for inane tasks, such as counting the ceiling tiles (twice usually), dusting those tiny spaces between your computer keys, or figuring out your annual leave into the next century.

Reasons for procrastination may vary from individual to individual, but, more often than not, it's choices we've made or even our own behavior that keeps us from reaching our goals. Oddly, fear of failure and of success are also big reasons for procrastination.

Regardless of whether you continually choose simpler assignments over more difficult ones or just refrain from returning phone calls, the end result is still the same—work that doesn't get done.

However, overcoming procrastination can be as simple as recognizing that you're doing it. Take the time to study your work habits so you can analyze, among other things, why you procrastinate, which assignments you tend to put off the most, and how you act when

you are procrastinating.

You may want to take the time to write down some of your observations so that you can see your pitfalls in black and white. While writing, take note of any trends you may have developed. Is the list growing faster in one area than another? Are you selective with what you do get done and what you should get done?

In any job there are some tasks or assignments that are less enjoyable than others, particularly large projects. Sometimes looking at such projects as a whole can be a bit overwhelming and more than your mind can handle. If that's the case, try breaking the project into smaller tasks that you can easily accomplish. With practice, you will be able to work your way through a project piece-by-piece instead of being intimidated by the whole picture.

So, the next time you are faced with an assignment you would like to put off until tomorrow catch yourself before you start counting those ceiling tiles yet again.

Do You Qualify for Earned Income Credit?

By Elaine Lawson,
Work and Family Life Program

Are you part of a working family that had an income of less than \$22,370 in 1992 and at least one child living at home for more than half the year? If so, you may qualify for earned income credit (EIC). This tax credit is available to both married and single parents regardless of whether you owe income tax.

To apply for EIC you need to file a Federal income tax return (Form 1040A or 1040) and fill out "Schedule EIC," and attach it to your tax return.

If you don't owe taxes, you can file for the EIC after April 15. Call the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) toll free with any questions. The number is 1-800-829-1040. Tax forms can be obtained from the IRS, your local Post Office, and many banks and libraries.

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Letters to the Editor

In the January/February issue of *Inside APHIS*, we reported the generous Christmas spirit of APHIS headquarters and Hyattsville personnel and their efforts to give local Van Ness Elementary School students a Merry Christmas.

PPQ officer Barbara A. Moss in San Diego, California, forwarded an account of APHIS Christmas spirit from the field.

According to Moss, PPQ officer Kyra Petrin motivated her coworkers at the port of San Diego to donate non-perishable food items and toys for charity. She filled the trunk of her car with the boxes and bags of collected items and delivered them to Chula Vista Cares. Thanks to Kyra's initiative and leadership, PPQ was able to provide Chula Vista Cares with much-appreciated donations.

—Editor

WAC is Helping Develop APHIS Women of the Future

By Anna Cherry, Public Information, LPA

"We are headed in the right direction," said acting APHIS Administrator Lonnie King, while addressing the standing-room-only crowd gathered in Hyattsville for the January awards ceremony and installation of new officers of APHIS' Women's Advisory Committee (WAC). King also noted that the future holds many challenges, and WAC could help its members develop the skills necessary for survival in an ever-changing environment.

Accepting the Challenge

JoAnne Garbe (REAC), the newly-elected 1993 WAC chair, appreciated King's speech and the challenges he presented. "WAC embraces and accepts these challenges," says Garbe. "There is a lot that needs to be done, and there is plenty to go around. I would like to see women become empowered, but I recognize that this is not going to happen in a year. It is a gradual process of helping women grow and develop self-confidence, and I believe WAC can enhance both of these things."

According to Garbe, WAC's goals are: to provide a forum for the exchange of information on issues of concern to APHIS women; to enhance the professionalism of women in APHIS; to develop strategies by which women can improve and enhance their contributions to APHIS' mission, goals, and objectives; to improve the status of women in APHIS and the Federal Government; to increase APHIS' responsiveness to the needs of women; and to propose policies concerning APHIS women.

Garbe, whose background is in law and veterinary medicine, has been involved in WAC since its beginning in 1991.

"I am very enthusiastic about what the committee is doing," she says. "I consider myself a feminist promoting women in the workplace and helping women to achieve their potential."

According to membership chair Doris Palusky, WAC's membership is booming, with more than 140 APHIS members, several of whom are men.

Funding New Programs

It was announced at the January meeting that, for the first time, the Equal Opportunity and Civil Rights office has allocated some funds for WAC's budget.

"This funding will open up more opportunities and allow us to provide better programs for APHIS employees and fund women's leadership development training," says Garbe.

One of the new programs will be a series of quarterly WAC weeks, the first of which is tentatively scheduled in April. Each week will consist of 3 days of programs, including speakers, films, and workshops.

The first WAC week will deal with "Woman in the Era of Change" and will include workshops on SF-171 preparation and interviewing techniques. Its goal will be to teach women how to market themselves to

be more competitive for higher-level positions in the workplace," says Garbe.

Additional Goals

To increase its communication activities, WAC would like to produce a regular information memo listing past and future events as well as available training. "We also want to create a library of news updates and videotapes of the meetings and programs," adds Garbe. "We want to be a depository and disseminator of information for women in APHIS."

"WAC gives a lot to APHIS, and it is a place where women find positive reinforcement. I am very enthusiastic about what the future holds," she finishes." For more information on WAC or upcoming activities, contact JoAnne Garbe at (301) 436-7833.



APHIS PHOTO BY LAURIE SMITH

The installation of the new Women's Advisory Committee officers took place on January 7, 1993, in Hyattsville. Elaine Gilbert, the committee's publicity chair, addresses the audience and the officers sitting to her left. The officers are: Chair JoAnne Garbe (REAC), Vice Chair Karen Day (M&B), Treasurer Doris McLaughlin (M&B), Recording Secretary Violet Harris (PPQ), and Corresponding Secretary Deborah Overton (BBEP).

"PPQ is More Committed Than Ever," says Glen Lee.

By Eric Berthelette, Executive Correspondence, LPA

When most PPQ employees leave work, they would probably prefer to stop thinking about their jobs. But, as PPQ Deputy Administrator B. Glen Lee points out, when you look around, there are reminders of the benefits of PPQ's programs almost everywhere. From the fields to the marketplace, the influence of PPQ's programs is apparent. Thanks to their efforts, U.S. agricultural products are some of the most affordable and highest quality products in the world. "Sometimes I think we can lose sight of the importance of what we do," says Lee. "Without PPQ, and certainly without APHIS, our agricultural production system in this country would be in serious trouble."

Facing Challenges At Home and Abroad

This past year alone PPQ has had to face one challenge after another: implementing an eradication program in Washington and Oregon for the Asian gypsy moth; combatting introductions of Mediterranean, Oriental, and Mexican fruit flies in California; participating in an interagency technical working group to coordinate research, education, and regulatory activities to address problems presented by Africanized honey bees; and negotiating cooperative intrastate quarantines for the pine shoot beetle in the Great Lakes region.

"Without PPQ, and certainly without APHIS, our agricultural production system in this country would be in serious trouble."

Changes occurring around the world are also placing new demands on PPQ and are putting the program's expertise, fresh attitude, and new strategies to the test. The recent developments in Russia combined with the difficult time the timber industry is experiencing in obtaining affordable logs in the United States has piqued interest in importing logs into this country from the Russian Far East and from

several other countries.

PPQ has been caught in the middle trying to develop workable entry requirements to allow the importation of the much-needed logs, while ensuring foreign pests are not introduced into this country in the process. To address this problem, PPQ conducted extensive pest risk assessments in several countries and has proposed workable entry requirements that should go into effect this year.

"With this trend, we may also see a higher incidence of costly pest and disease outbreaks."

The formation of the European Community (EC) has also affected PPQ. In the past, PPQ has negotiated entry requirements for U.S. products with each individual European country, creating a collection of agreements that vary greatly in their restrictions. With the dissolution of internal boundaries in the EC, PPQ is faced with negotiating entry requirements that address the countries' pest concerns but do not unduly affect U.S. agricultural exports.

"Problems arise," says Lee, "when U.S. products that are accepted in one European country are transported into a country that restricts that product's importation. We need to help establish safeguards that address these kinds of plant health concerns."

Wanted: More Personnel

Exotic pests do not find their way into this country very easily. In 1991, the agricultural quarantine inspection (AQI) staff cleared almost 357,000 planes for entry into the United States. Officers intercepted about 1.8 million prohibited items and identified more than 56,000 pests and diseases that could pose a threat to U.S. agriculture.

Unfortunately, Lee does not see the AQI workload dropping off any time soon. "We are facing a trend of increased international traffic of both cargo and passengers, which may lead to staffing problems at

ports of entry," he says. "With this trend, we may also see a higher incidence of costly pest and disease outbreaks."

Although more personnel may eventually be needed to detect exotic plant pests or diseases at the ports, the number of students graduating in related fields, such as entomology, plant pathology, and horticulture, seems to be on the decline. As a result, Lee is trying to incorporate a more flexible hiring approach.

"Many schools have developed more integrated curricula, and we might pass up some desirable candidates unless we consider a wider range of related course work in our evaluations," he says. "The added benefit of an expanded search is broadening the base of diverse candidates and increasing our workforce diversity."

Emphasis on Employees

In spite of all the challenges facing PPQ, Lee asserts that spirits are high in the program and believes this morale is part of a larger attitude flourishing in APHIS.

"Our people are dedicated to what they do, and I find that very encouraging."

"There is an outstanding level of commitment in PPQ," says Lee. "We have highly qualified and dedicated people, and, with the extensive support we have recently received from the Administrator's Office, I believe morale has increased tremendously among PPQ and other APHIS employees. In fact, you'd be hard pressed to find someone slacking off at APHIS. Our people are dedicated to what they do, and I find that very encouraging."

To increase employee involvement in the program, PPQ has established regional employee utilization committees made up of employee representatives. Employees can submit to the committee representatives their suggestions on how to make PPQ more effective. In using these committees, PPQ ensures their policy decisions

benefit from the input and practical experience of employees.

Other steps Lee has taken to promote employee advancement include increasing PPQ employees' access to leadership training by changing the step prerequisite from GS-12 to GS-11 and requiring regional offices to set aside a percentage of their budgets for employee training and recognition awards.

Exploring a Management Alternative

Lee also hopes to identify new management styles that will make better use of employee expertise. "Right now, most of our activities are managed under a traditional structure, much like the military, with progressive levels of command," states Lee. "However, many of our functions may lend themselves to alternative management structures that more evenly distribute responsibility."

"Our highest priority is an investment in people. Everyone benefits from employees reaching their potential and contributing to the organization."

PPQ's AQI staff at Miami International Airport in Florida is already experimenting with one such management alternative. They are participating in a pilot study that is looking at the viability of utilizing self-directed work teams to delegate responsibilities, rotate assignments, and manage staff affairs using group input and consensus.

Under this system, supervisors no longer directly manage work activities but act as mentors that the team can consult for technical assistance or advice. According to Lee, "self-directed teams provide both supervisory and non-supervisory personnel with the opportunity to significantly contribute to accomplishing PPQ's mission."

"Our highest priority is an investment in people," finishes Lee. "Everyone benefits from employees



APHIS PHOTO BY LAURIE SMITH

A native of Hollister, North Carolina, B. Glen Lee began Government service with USDA's Agricultural Research Service in 1962 after earning a bachelor of science degree in agriculture technology at North Carolina State University.

A charter member of APHIS, Lee has been with the agency since its beginnings in 1972 and has held such positions as PPQ staff agriculturalist and PPQ assistant director for national survey and emergency response activities.

In 1987, Lee became regional director of PPQ's Western Region, overseeing program activities in 14 States and 2 territories. He was selected to head the program in 1990.

For his outstanding contributions in protecting U.S. agriculture, Lee was presented the Rank of Distinguished Executive Award by President Bush in January 1992.

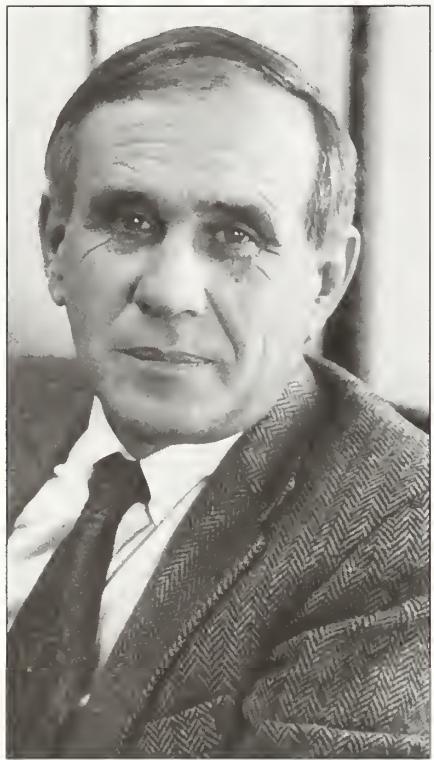
reaching their potential and contributing to the organization." In this

case, not only does PPQ benefit but all U.S. consumers as well.

Protecting Plants From Plunderers and Profiteers

By Sharon Scheidhauer, Executive Correspondence, LPA

Tucked away in a small office in the hectic PPQ headquarters in Hyattsville, Maryland, Don Thompson, a port operations officer, sits quietly with a telephone receiver to his ear. Numerous botany textbooks, plant encyclopedias, gardening guides, and a stunning amaryllis surround him. He is explaining to an exporter the requirements to ship a rare orchid overseas. He informs the exporter that, because the orchid is listed under the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), it cannot be collected from the wild, and he must apply for an export permit.



APHIS PHOTO BY LAURIE SMITH

PPQ's Don Thompson has the main responsibility in APHIS for administering CITES in regard to the importation and exportation of plants into the United States.

Such discussions are common for Thompson. Since 1978, he has had the main responsibility in APHIS for administering CITES. This international treaty, which was established in 1973, restricts trade in threatened and endangered wildlife and plants.

The Nuts and Bolts of CITES

As the management authority for CITES, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is responsible for administering this treaty with regard to wildlife species exported from the United States. However, because of the numerous PPQ officers APHIS has stationed at ports-of-entry across the country, the agency has been delegated the authority to administer CITES with regard to the importation and exportation of plants. Like the administration of the treaty, the responsibility for issuing CITES permits and the enforcement of CITES is also shared by the two agencies.

The species covered by CITES fall into three categories: the most threatened species, which can be collected from the wild only with special permission and, for the most part, are collected only for scientific research purposes; species that are traded commercially in large volumes and that can be artificially propagated or collected from the wild as long as their populations are monitored; and populations that are threatened within a country.

According to Thompson, the last category serves as an internal mechanism for countries to control trade in a species they are concerned about. It is not used often because some countries have domestic laws, such as our Endangered Species Act, for this purpose, and other countries prefer to use the first or second CITES categories to protect their plants.

Laying Down the Law

All plant and wildlife species entering this country that are covered by CITES must be accompanied by documentation from the exporting country verifying the

species' origin and granting permission to export them. Plants and plant products entering this country are required to go through one of APHIS' 16 plant inspection stations.

At the stations, PPQ inspectors ensure that all CITES-protected plants are accompanied by the proper documentation, the documents are valid, and the plants listed on the document are in fact the plants being shipped.

"Sometimes a shipment's documents are missing, do not match the species, or have been forged or altered," says Thompson. "If that's the case and a shipment is in violation of CITES, we will contact officials in the country of origin to ask whether they want the plants returned. Most countries decline," he says. "and APHIS initiates a forfeiture procedure whereby, after 21 days, the agency takes ownership of the plants and donates them to one of over 50 rescue centers or public institutions throughout the country that exhibit and propagate plants."

Currently, 117 countries have signed CITES, but, regardless of whether a country has signed the treaty or not, it is still responsible for providing proper documentation with shipments of CITES-protected plants or animals.

"The vast number of plant species listed under CITES—currently over 20,000—makes enforcement of the treaty difficult," acknowledges Thompson, who has tried to make it easier for PPQ field officers to identify such plants by holding training workshops and preparing inspection manuals.

Thompson has also worked in conjunction with his peers in other countries to develop identification guides to aid in the worldwide enforcement of CITES. He has even travelled to China, at that Government's request and expense, to advise on effective CITES enforcement.

"APHIS tries to have a balanced and reasonable approach to enforcement," emphasizes Thompson.

"We work hard to facilitate the legitimate movement of plants that are artificially propagated, which, in turn, helps eliminate the demand for wild-grown, CITES-protected plants."

What it Takes to Get on the CITES List

Although world populations of plant and animal species are constantly changing, new endangered or threatened species can be added to or removed from CITES by following certain procedures.

To do either of these, a signatory country submits a proposal to the main administrative body of CITES—the Secretariat, which is located in Switzerland. The Secretariat distributes copies of the proposal to all signatory countries prior to biennial CITES meetings. Extensive technical discussions are held on the proposal during the 2-week meeting. At the end of the meeting, a vote is taken—each country has one vote.

Thompson represents APHIS on the U.S. delegation at the biennial meetings, the last of which was in March 1992 in Kyoto, Japan. After the biennial meetings, each country pursues changes in CITES listings through its own legal system. In the United States, such changes must be published in the Federal Register.

Knowing when to add or remove a plant species can be difficult, considering the effect such a decision can have on international trade. Information on the status of worldwide species populations comes from various sources, including conservation groups, botanical groups, universities, and even Government officials. The United Nations' world-monitoring unit also helps tracks the populations of certain species.

A Change in Mentality

Through his long experience with CITES, Thompson has seen a change in the way in which it is viewed. "During the development of the treaty 20 years ago, the plant side was a mere stepchild to the animals, with the animal interest



APHIS PHOTO BY LAURIE SMITH

When flowers or plants covered under CITES are imported into this country, PPQ inspectors must ensure the shipment is accompanied by the proper CITES documentation and that the documents match the contents of the shipment.

groups dominating the talks. But now, people are thinking more about the total ecosystem," explains Thompson. "At the Kyoto meeting last year, there was more discussion on plants than in the whole history of the treaty. Plants are now receiving a tremendous amount of attention, especially where the listing of an eco-nomically important plant species, such as the tropical hardwoods, is concerned."

Thompson believes that, during the 1980's, another change occurred. "Because of the increased attention environmental issues received at that time, there was a switch in mentality," he says. "In my judgment, there was a worldwide consensus that people must start paying attention to environmental issues and doing whatever we can to alter our destiny in regard to the environment. This generated more support for CITES than ever."

"However," continues Thompson, "CITES still has its critics. It regulates the way people trade, and many are resistant to this oversight. But something has to be done when

we discover that only five plants of a species exist in the world, and, in the 3 months after their discovery, all five are for sale and have been removed from the wild. It may not be perfect, but CITES is the only international mechanism available to protect these species."

Thompson adds that, in our modern world, there are reasons other than beauty for preserving plant species. "In using biotechnology, the genetic diversity that each species provides is of paramount importance," he says. "A part of the gene pool is lost forever when a species dies. It is irreplaceable." So CITES, in its 20th year, will continue to do what it does best—protect our unique plant kingdom.

The Doctor is In

By Jamie Ambrosi,
Executive Correspondence, LPA

As children, we often think about what we will become when we grow up—a firefighter, a scientist, an astronaut, a ballet dancer, or even a lion tamer in the circus. According to Anwar Rizvi, a PPQ officer currently assigned to Baltimore's Locust Point piers, his childhood career dreams were right on target.

It was as a young boy in Sheikhpura, Pakistan, that Rizvi developed a commitment to plant health that would take him from the mountains of Peru to the marshes of Indonesia.

"I can remember shopping in the marketplace in my town when I was very young," he says, smiling. "I would examine the fruits and vegetables so carefully that the merchants would joke with me saying, 'here comes the doctor,' as I approached them."

Rizvi's concern for the health of fruits and vegetables eventually led him from the town's marketplace to the Agricultural University at Lyallpur, Pakistan, where he studied plant pathology and plant breeding and genetics and taught plant protection for almost 5 years. He later immigrated to the United States and earned his Ph.D. from Rutgers University in plant pathology.

"I was very interested in using my academic knowledge to research plant viruses and diseases that affected people in the world," he says. "I have always believed that science should be used to improve people's lives."

Taking his Message Around the World

After graduating in 1978, Rizvi was hired as a plant pathologist/breeder by the International Potato Center in Lima, Peru, and sent on assignment there. "The project," he says, "was to breed potato plants that were resistant to potato virus Y (PVY) and potato leafroll virus (PLRV), so healthy potatoes could be grown throughout the world."

After 4-1/2 years of intensive research, Rizvi's team was successful in developing several potato clones resistant to PVY and PLRV.

Rizvi's next assignment took him to Indonesia on a project that was sponsored by the Agency for International Development (AID). "On



APHIS PHOTO BY LAURIE SMITH

PPQ officer Anwar Rizvi examines a bush for euonymus scale.

this project, we were to improve the quality of Indonesia's staple crops, such as rice, soybean, peanut and corn," says Rizvi.

He assisted the plant pathology department of the Maros Research Institute for Food Crops (MORIF). "Because MORIF had no serological testing facilities or procedures to detect and identify plant diseases," he says, "we had to help them develop a diagnostic and clinical laboratory and build a new research lab. Their national junior researchers also had to be taught how to gather information from the field and examine it in the lab. I can still remember watching their Government officials trying to grasp the basics of plant protection," he says, sighing.

The Weary Traveler Finally Returns Home

After traveling around the world on assignments for 8-1/2 years, Rizvi decided he was ready to come back to the United States as a visiting scientist at the University of Minnesota. He later moved to Maryland on a similar assignment with the Agricultural Research Service's (ARS) Florist and Nursery Crop Lab in Beltsville. While with ARS, Rizvi continued to accept short-term assignments for AID and also began working as a consultant for the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

which he still does today.

Over the years, Rizvi's work with FAO has allowed him to travel around the globe to such places as Tonga, Argentina, South Korea, Uruguay, and Honduras conducting training programs and teaching Government officials the basics of plant protection. "I enjoy working on these projects," says Rizvi. "I can travel for a couple of months to other countries but still return home when the projects are complete."

A Good First Impression

It was on a mission to the Dominican Republic in 1989 that Rizvi observed APHIS in action for the first time. "I was there on an AID-funded project to strengthen the Dominican Government's plant health services and improve APHIS' international pre-clearance program for fruits and vegetables being shipped to the United States," he says. "Although I had no previous experience with APHIS, I was very impressed with their inspection and testing procedures."

Rizvi was also impressed with APHIS' ability to prevent the spread of plant diseases by way of regulatory enforcement. "I had spent my life diagnosing and curing plant diseases," says Rizvi, "and then I saw a way to prevent those diseases from occurring in the first place. I knew then that I wanted to become involved with regulating and

controlling plant diseases." This decision led him to join APHIS' PPQ staff in 1991 as an officer in Baltimore.

"I am fortunate," says Rizvi, "to have an agreement with APHIS that allows me to work as a PPQ officer most of the year then take leave without pay to travel to different countries as a consultant for FAO. Since joining APHIS, I have traveled

to Honduras to organize and conduct two national training courses in plant protection and lecture Government officials on various aspects of plant pathology."

If the merchants in the Sheik-hupura marketplace could see Rizvi today, they probably would not be surprised to find that the little boy nicknamed the doctor has indeed fulfilled his childhood dreams.

ISCD Cosponsors Technology Showcase

By Robert Smoot, ISCD

The Information Systems and Communications Division's (ISCD), Technical Support Division cosponsored the semiannual Federal Information Technology Showcase (FITS) in conjunction with the Department of the Treasury on February 3, 1993. Ira Hobbs, Acting Senior Information Resources Management (IRM) Official, represented APHIS at the opening ceremonies and welcomed participating vendors and end users. He commented on the positive impact the FITS shows have on APHIS IRM acquisitions.

Vendors represented at the show included: WordPerfect (WP) Corporation, GRiD Systems, Cincinnati

Bell Information Systems, Software Publishing, Bohdan, ORACLE Corporation, and many more. Technical briefings were offered by the following vendors: Oracle Corporation's "Oracle7 Technology Update," MicroSoft's "Windows

NT," WP's "Presentation Version 2.0," and Information Strategies Group's "MicroTrends for the Nineties."

APHIS' participation in the FITS allowed end users an opportunity to gain a firsthand look at the latest technology offered today. This year's show was attended by approximately 200 individuals. The next FITS show is scheduled for Oct. 13.



APHIS PHOTO BY LAURIE SMITH

On February 3, 1993, the Technical Support Division of the Information Systems and Communication Division (ISCD) cosponsored a Federal Information Technology Showcase with the Department of Treasury in Hyattsville. GRiD Systems' representatives show ISCD Director Ira Hobbs (left) and Branch Chief of ISCD's Program Development Division Vernelle Archer some of their latest hardware.

Support Programs are Available for APHIS Women

In 1967, the Civil Service Commission—now the Office of Personnel Management—set up the Federal Women's Program (FWP) to enhance the employment and growth of women within Federal agencies. The formation of this program has resulted in agencies giving women special emphasis in an effort to achieve equal opportunity in employment in the Federal service. FWP seeks to guarantee women employees equal opportunities with men in all facets of employment. The program's specific objectives are: to encourage the recruitment, hiring, training, and retention of women; to counsel women about opportunities for advancement; and to publicize achievements of women as an incentive.

In support of FWP, APHIS' Equal Opportunity and Civil Rights staff and Federal Women's Program Managers from the Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS), the Packers and Stockyards Administration (PS&A), and the Agricultural Cooperative Service (ACS) have established the Women's Information Network (WIN). Under the leadership of Barbara Patterson, APHIS' Federal Women's Program Manager, WIN will serve as a focal point for planning training sessions, programs, and activities that are related to women's issues. The committee held its first meeting on January 27, 1993, to brainstorm for planning Women's History Months for APHIS and the partner agencies. For more information regarding FWP or WIN, contact Barbara Patterson at (202) 720-6312.

WIN Committee Members

Gwendolyn Davis, M&B
Jan Holmes, PPQ
Pat Owens, VS
Deborah Overton, BBEP
Eva Ring, PPD
Karen Spatz, ACS
Dana Stewart, FGIS
Margaret Webb, LPA
Anna West, IS
Sara Wright, PS&A

Jackson from page 1

immunity to this type of rejection?" he asked. "What must you have on the inside to make you rise above it, survive through it, let it hit you and not make you wet? What must you have special that allows you to be born in the slum and yet the slum not be born in you?"

Jackson also indicated in his speech what he felt were some of the problems facing African Americans today.

"My pain today," he said. "My pain today is that much of that resolve has been lost by our children. That becomes the burden of our history as well. Most of our wounds today are not from some

klansman. Not some lynching. Some hanging. Self-inflicted wounds. Babies making babies that won't raise them. Self-inflicted wounds. Refuse to use opportunities to go to school. Choose 5 hours of t.v. a night. Choose entertainment over education. Self-inflicted wounds. We look at the glorious dimensions of our history. We marched much. Bled profusely. Died young. Made gallant contributions to make America better. . . . That is the challenge of this day," affirmed Jackson. "To make new choices. To bring America to the next century."

Jackson's moving speech ended with a feeling of optimism. "I want to leave this place on a note of enlightenment," he said. "A note of redemption. Of renewal. Of revival. Of hope. Keep hope alive."

As the audience applauded their appreciation, Jackson invited the students to join him on stage. With the American flag hanging from the rafters behind them, one couldn't help but be struck by the vision of the children of tomorrow flanked by the man who is fighting for their future today.



Stephanie Luster, a student at the University of the District of Columbia, received an overwhelming standing ovation after singing the inspirational "One Moment in Time."



Cultural Dress/ Food Festivities

As part of African American History Month, a Cultural Dress/Food Fest was held at the Prince Georges Community Center in Hyattsville on Feb. 17. There was plenty of multicultural food to sample and many people got into the spirit and wore cultural attire.

Nicole Haile and Cynthia Dunn from M&B's EOCSR staff are wearing colorful kufus or African crowns. Dunn is also wearing a kinte cloth strip draped over her shoulder.

Celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King's Dream

By Nicole Ashby, Public Information, LPA

It took us more than 20 years to legislate the observance of the birth of a man who challenged a nation to embrace the notion of equality among all races. January 18 of this year marked the fourth anniversary of public law 98-144, which states that the third Monday in January of each year is a public holiday in honor of the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

USDA employees came out in droves on the third Monday of this January to see the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. commemoration program. The 500-seat Jefferson Auditorium was filled within minutes of the start of the program, leaving many employees shoulder-to-shoulder in the hallways watching television monitors.

Sponsored by the Office of Advocacy and Enterprise and the Forum on Blacks in Agriculture, the program included notable speakers, such as former Deputy Secretary Ann M. Veneman, Jim Lucas of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, and District of Columbia Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton.

Lucas' performance of Dr. King's famous 1963 March on Washington address was remarkable considering his keen physical resemblance to Dr. King and his familiar intonation. His "I Have a Dream" performance was just as impressive.

Dr. King's immortal words resonated through the audience: "When all of God's children—black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Catholics and Protestants—will be able to join hands and to sing in the words of the old negro spiritual, 'Free at last, free at last; thank God Almighty, we are free at last.'" Looking at the faces in the audience, it was obvious Dr. King's dream is still alive.

"Resistance cannot begin when the violence takes place; it must begin with the other part of Dr. King's legacy," said District Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton, the program's keynote speaker and the first woman elected to represent Washington in the House of Representatives. "His message of tolerance and nonviolence makes his birthday a compellingly relevant occasion," she said.

Norton also commended the appointment of Mike Espy, USDA's

first African American Secretary of Agriculture, and recognized his appointment as a direct reflection of a Government administration representing the diversities of its people. A reputable civil rights and women's rights leader herself, Norton is known for helping pave the road to the 1991 reenactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

In addition to the program's many orations, the crowd was enthralled by soloists Lamont Ray of the Foreign Agricultural Service and Vicki Page of the Office of the Secretary. The program closed with the audience joining in the singing of the negro national anthem "Lift Every Voice and Sing" and "We Shall Overcome."

PPQ Canine Officers Receive Airport Ambassador Award



APHIS PHOTO

PPQ Canine Officers Tim Walker (front row, left) and his canine Nero from Newark International Airport and Steve Manwarring and his canine Kiwi from John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFKIA) were two of the recipients of this year's Airport Ambassador Award. They are also the only two USDA employees to ever receive such awards, which are given by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey to those providing service to the traveling public that is above and beyond the call of duty. Manwarring's award was the result of his helping comfort and entertain a group of German children who were delayed at JFKIA. Walker, on the other hand, received the award for consistently being the most helpful officer around. Behind the Canine Officers are (from left to right) PPQ Aid George Nelson, Assistant Regional Director of the Northeastern Region—MidAtlantic Mary Petrie, Assistant Regional Director of JFKIA Arnold Finamore, Port of Elizabeth Supervisor Donna L. West, and Assistant Officer in Charge at JFKIA Mary Benzie.

Pesky Rodents Cause Trouble for Chad Farmers

Rodents, such as rats, mice, and gerbils, are viewed differently by different people. Some keep these mammals as pets, while others set traps to catch them. For the most part, they are merely thought to be nuisances that cause relatively few problems. Farmers in Chad and other African countries in the Sahelian region know differently. To them, rodents can mean the difference between feast or famine.

As is true in any country, good weather and plenty of rainfall are essential for a prosperous farming season. This fact alone considerably decreases Chad's chances for plentiful vegetation, but farmers there have other factors to contend with as well.

In 1986, on the heels of a severe drought, several African countries declared national agricultural disasters due to massive outbreaks of rodents. Lack of knowledge about the rodent species, their population dynamics, and effective control measures hampered the United States' Agency for International Development's (AID) ability to provide these countries with any sort of assistance. Denver Wildlife Research Center (DWRC) officials were able to lend a hand and provided short-term technical assistance in 1987. However,

poor organization in crop protection and lack of trained in-country personnel, materials, transportation, and time in which to implement needed control measures prevented DWRC's success.

To help prepare for future outbreaks, a cooperative program between Chad's Ministry of Agriculture, AID, and APHIS was established to monitor rodent populations, evaluate control techniques, and train crop protection personnel.

Looking for a Clue

Joe Brooks, an ADC wildlife biologist from DWRC's International Programs Research Section, and several other DWRC biologists took on the Chad project in December 1991, after the initial project leader resigned.

According to Brooks, the project's primary goal was to study the pest species' life cycles, monitor their populations, and predict a model to indicate under what conditions a population explosion could occur. Brooks and DWRC colleagues, Richard Dolbeer and John McConnell, visited Chad on several occasions to collect data needed for their study.

Research on the rodents was conducted in areas near Karal and N'Gouri in various wadis, which are

labor-intensive, irrigated areas in interdunal depressions where onions, tomatoes, peppers, okra, manioa, sorghum, and millet are cultivated, and in dunes where millet is cultivated through extensive dry-land farming.

Although Brooks found snap traps baited with small pieces of cardboard impregnated with peanut oil to be effective in capturing some of the rodents, no one method was suitable for catching them all.

"The rodents we are concerned with are big seed, grass, and vegetable eaters," says Brooks. "They dig up newly-planted seeds and store them in their burrows as well as cause damage to stored foods needed for winter months."

Of the several rat and gerbil species studied by Brooks, the egyptian jerboa is of particular interest to him. "They have very exaggerated hind legs that allow them to really leap," he says. "They are also rather docile and will let you pick them up and hold them unlike the wild rats that won't hesitate to bite you."

Jerboas are common around N'Gouri, but project personnel rarely captured any in the snap traps—only three in over 3 years of trapping there. They were usually seen in vehicle headlights while they were crossing the roads, and Dolbeer and McConnell found this method to be most effective in conducting population surveys for this species.

Unforeseen Delays

The civil unrest in Chad has on more than one occasion kept Brooks and his colleagues from carrying out their rodent studies. "During the coup d'état in 1990," says Brooks, "the previous project leader and his family had to come back home. Even when we returned to Chad it wasn't uncommon to see people shooting rocket-propelled grenades through houses. Luckily, no Americans were injured in all this, just a few damaged houses." Since then, Chad has only had some sporadic guerrilla problems coming from Sudan and Central Africa.

Words of Wisdom

Although the surveying and research in Chad was concluded in



APHIS PHOTO BY JOE BROOKS

Multimammate rats, nocturnal omnivores that live in field burrows and houses, were found both at N'Gouri and in the Karal area by DWRC researchers. One of Africa's most pervasive rats, the multimammate rat is a formidable pest of crops as well as a carrier of plague and Lassa fever. These rodents can have litters of, on average, 11 young, sometimes increasing to 12 or 13 per female in times of favorable nutrition.

December 1992, funding for the project will continue through September 1993. Brooks and his colleagues at DWRC are in the process of compiling the data collected throughout the project and developing a training manual in English and French that will describe how to monitor, predict, and prevent future rodent outbreaks. The manual is scheduled to be distributed the summer of 1993.

"With the knowledge and experience gained from the Chad project," concludes Brooks, "DWRC is able to provide West African Sahelian countries with strategies and tools to better predict and circumvent the next rodent outbreak."



APHIS PHOTO BY JOE BROOKS

An AID employee, Mohammad El-Haji N'Gaba, helps DWRC set snap traps in a wadi.

Information Systems Planning Project Receives High Priority

By Larry Mark, Assistant to the Director, LPA

"This may be the most important thing you'll ever do for APHIS," says Acting Administrator Lonnie King, while addressing the ISP project team members. According to King, ISP is considered to be a high-priority project. ISP? A high-priority project? It almost sounds like APHIS is dabbling in some secret, undercover work. Well, in actuality, ISP is not a code word. It stands for Information Systems Planning—a team of APHIS employees set up to document how the agency works, what information we create and use, and how we can conduct our activities more efficiently and effectively.

"The goal of the ISP project is to help determine ways the agency can better organize, manage, and utilize its information resources to support the APHIS mission," says Mike Gregoire, Budget and Accounting Division Director and full-time ISP head. The team began by looking at APHIS' Strategic Plan and determining those activities the agency carries out to accomplish its eight service delivery areas, such as excluding exotic pests.

"What we came up with," continues Gregoire, "was 33 unduplicated processes in the agency that take input, add value, and produce an output. These processes included such activities as planning programs, performing inspections,

developing methods, providing public information, and acquiring and managing people, funds, and equipment."

The ISP team also conducted a series of interviews of 51 APHIS managers from different levels and units to obtain their input and validate the team's representation of how the agency works. According to Gregoire, the team then analyzed the interview results and prepared a report with some recommendations.

Phase I of the ISP project was completed and a report was formally presented on March 10 to the agency Information Resource Management (IRM) Council, which is chaired by Acting Administrator King and is made up of key executives from the agency's units. The Phase I report concluded that information is an important resource of the agency and that we need to do a better job of managing it. The team recommended, among other things, better planning, more executive-level involvement in decisionmaking about IRM plans and policies, the adoption of standards, more training, and the clarification of roles. The team also made a number of recommendations for improvements in APHIS processes.

The IRM Council decided to proceed with Phase II of the ISP project and plans to review the

Phase I report in detail and decide how to implement the recommendations. "ISP is not a quick fix," says Gregoire. "It is a multi-year effort to improve the way we manage our information resources. Phase II of the project will take what we've done and break it down into greater detail. Ultimately, the ISP project will enable us to develop a framework to better use and share information in APHIS and help eliminate redundancies and duplication of effort. We hope it will also make information more accessible throughout APHIS so we can use computers to get timely and accurate information," he states.

ISP team members included: PPQ's Chuck Schwalbe and John McLeod; VS' Hugh Metcalf and Chuck Campbell; BBEP's Arnold Foudin; ADC's Bill Clay; HRD's Patty Murray and John Thaw; IS' Marshall Kirby; REAC's Alan Christian; M&B's Victor Ponte and Dale Rendahl; PPD's Natalie Roberts; and myself from LPA. Emil Ewing, Jenny Clouse, and Ann Himchak have been detailed from ISCD on a full-time basis to provide the ISP team with technical and clerical support. The team also has two experts on information systems planning from outside the agency—Terri Kennedy from General Services Administration and Jerry Hill, a private consultant.

Charles Dents, Veterinary Medical Officer in Puerto Rico

By Mary Yurkovich, Public Information, LPA



APHIS PHOTO BY LAURIE SMITH

For the last 25 years, Veterinary Medical Officer Charlie Dents has strived to keep Puerto Rico disease-free, and he's enjoyed every minute of it.

Mornings in the mountains around Arecibo, Puerto Rico, are quiet. The sounds here are far different from city sounds—the “coqui” of the tree frog mixes with water falling over rocks on its way down through banana, palm, and flamboyant trees. The mists virtually hang over the valleys. At sun-up on the hillsides, cattle line up for the morning milking.

For Veterinary Medical Officer (VMO) Charlie Dents, who moved to Puerto Rico in 1968, the magic of the island—La Isla del Encanto—has captivated him. He has no wish to ever leave, even though he grew up in a different land and in a different culture.

“When I was young,” says Dents, “I attended a two-teacher, segregated school in Lampasas, Texas, near Austin. I got a bachelor’s degree in agricultural education in 1943 and worked as an assistant to a veterinarian for 2 to 3 years. Then, I performed an embryotomy—the removal of a dead calf from a cow—and the cow lived. Well, after that I thought I could perform miracles.”

Dents graduated from Tuskegee University’s School of Veterinary Medicine in 1951 and joined USDA’s Bureau of Animal Industry in Mexico, where he conducted foot-and-mouth disease surveillance

until the disease’s eradication from Mexico in 1953. At that time, he returned to Tuskegee to begin a 12-year teaching career in veterinary obstetrics, gynecology, and the diagnosis of large-animal species.

In 1967, Dents left Alabama and Tuskegee for a private practice in Powers Lake, North Dakota, a town about 20 miles south of the Canadian border. “I was the only black resident in a town of mostly Norwegians,” recalls Dents. “I ran a mixed practice for both large and small animals, and it didn’t take long before I realized I had made a mistake. It was too cold up there, and I wasn’t suited to private practice. I jumped at the chance to return to Federal service in Puerto Rico. The day I left North Dakota it was 41 degrees below zero, and I’ve been thawing out ever since.”

When Dents arrived in Puerto Rico, the animal industry there was growing, and it was plagued with screwworm, hog cholera, brucellosis, and tuberculosis. Dents worked to eradicate these diseases and pests primarily around Arecibo—the center of the dairy industry. He also surveyed for pseudorabies in swine and helped with the eradication of hog cholera.

In 1973, Dents himself contracted brucellosis. “For humans,” he explains, “the disease is like

influenza; you experience malaise. I had it for a year, a month, and 15 days. Although it was never determined how I actually contracted brucellosis, it’s possible I got it from bleeding infected cattle for tests.”

Over the years, Dents has befriended and encouraged many protegees. “Charlie’s been a father to me,” declares Jose Reyes, one of his assistants. “He has taught me everything I know.”

Another former assistant, Jose “Flaco” Rodriguez, also thinks of Dents as part of his family. “I began working with Charlie when I was 17,” recalls Rodriguez. “We were together for 11 years until I converted to a Federal employee and began working in another program. Now I’m back working for him as one of his animal health technicians. Through all these years we have remained friends. He was the first person to visit the hospital when my daughters were born.”

VMO John Duncan, an American who has been in Puerto Rico for 6 years, echoes Reyes and Rodriguez’ feelings about Dents. “Charlie is a wealth of information and is willing to share his knowledge with everyone.”

In 1989, the Puerto Rico Dairy Association honored Dents for his support and service to the industry. Although it’s only by prodding that Dents will say he made any contribution to the elimination of brucellosis and hog cholera from Puerto Rico, his friends say he is responsible for making it happen.

“Charlie is probably the only 72-year-old field VMO still actively working cattle,” says VMO John Shaw, another protegee and friend of Dents. “and he does it with more stamina than most could muster.”

Although Dents is uncomfortable discussing his own accomplishments, he is always enthusiastic about Puerto Rico. As his eyes linger on the hills after pointing out the Arecibo Observatory, the world’s largest radio telescope, it’s easy to recall what his friends say about Dents. “In his long life, he has made the choices for happiness—not career advancement, not money, not position. Working with animals and working with people, especially Puerto Ricans—for Dents, these are the important things.”

All Around APHIS

Animal Welfare Ruling—A Federal judge has issued a court order calling for the revision of the animal welfare regulations. The regulations were issued in 1991 that apply to dogs and primates. The decision was based on a 1990 suit by the Animal Legal Defense Fund. APHIS is currently reviewing the decision in consultation with the Office of General Counsel and the Department of Justice.

Potato Exports to Canada Resume

Resume—Effective Feb. 24, the United States and Canada have agreed to changes in import-export requirements that will allow U.S. potatoes to be exported to Canada from all States that APHIS has found to be PVY-N-free. The Feb. 24 interim rule also removed certain restrictions on the importation of Canadian potatoes.

New Porcine Respiratory and Reproductive Syndrome (PRRS) Survey

VS has developed a National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS) survey to be used on a pilot basis to monitor the incidence of new cases of PRRS in five or six veterinary practices. In addition to monitoring current

disease incidence, the survey will also evaluate the feasibility of using veterinary practices to monitor disease incidence in general.

New Brucellosis Test—After successful completion prelicensing tests, the D-Tec Brucella A. Diagnostic Test Kit has been licensed by APHIS. The new test, which was produced by Synbiotics Corporation in San Diego, CA, will differentiate brucellosis-infected animals from those vaccinated with strain 19 vaccine.

Reorganization in PPQ—PPQ's Program Review and Planning (PRP) staff has replaced the Planning Design staff within the Operational Support division. Among other things, the PRP staff will ensure that PPQ's Strategic Plan is maintained and used to its fullest advantage and that it effectively supports the APHIS Strategic Plan.

New Zealand Logs—APHIS published regulations for the importation of Monterey pine and Douglas-fir logs from New Zealand. To import these logs, importers must obtain a permit from APHIS and a certificate from the plant protection

service of New Zealand. The certificate must state that the logs meet the health requirements specified by APHIS, including debarking and fumigation. The logs are still subject to inspection by APHIS officials at the port of entry and to other post-importation requirements, such as heat treatment at the sawmill or processing facility.

Mediterranean Fruit Fly

Funding—USDA Secretary Espy announced the Clinton Administration has transferred \$16.46 million in emergency funds for APHIS to continue its cooperative effort to eradicate the Mediterranean fruit fly (Medfly) in California. California authorities and APHIS quarantined part of San Jose County and parts of three counties in the Los Angeles area last fall because of Medfly outbreaks. Federal and State employees have been regulating the movement of fruits and vegetables, trapping for Medflies, applying ground sprays, and releasing sterile flies in these locations in an effort to eradicate the pest.



APHIS PHOTO BY KEVIN CONNER

Bob O'Brien, APHIS' Savings Bond Coordinator, presents Acting Administrator Lonnie King with the U.S. Savings Bond Division of the Department of Treasury Award, which APHIS received for exceeding the new-savers goal in the 1992 campaign. O'Brien, who is gearing up for the 1993 campaign, anticipates APHIS will do as well as if not better this year. The 1993 savings bond campaign is scheduled to begin May 3 and run through May 31. Employees should be receiving information shortly.

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